

Message Text

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51

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AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0049

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF, LT

SUBJ: TUCSA BLAMES ANGLO-AMERICAN & CHAMBER OF MINES FOR
BASOTHO GOLD MINE UNREST.

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1292; MASERU 0005

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

1. REFERRING TO DISCUSSIONS HELD LAST NOVEMBER IN MASERU WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF RECENTLY FORMED LESOTHO MINE LABOUR WORKERS UNION (REFTELS) & TO TUCSA'S SUBSEQUENT UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO ARRANGE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS WITH ANGLO-AMERICAN & CHAMBER OF MINES, TUCSA GENERAL SECRETARY ARTHUR GROBBELAAR ISSUED ANGRY STATEMENT JANUARY 15 IN WHICH HE CHARGED SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY WITH PAYING LIP SERVICE TO NEED FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS & BLACK WORKERS BUT WITH COMPLETELY FAILING TO TRANSLATE WORDS INTO ACTIONS.

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2. FULL TEXT OF GROBBELAAR'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

QTE THE BLAME FOR THE CONTINUING & ESCALATING INDUSTRIAL UNREST AMONG GASUTO MINeworkERS ON VARIOUS GOLD MINES MUST BE LAID SQUARELY AT THE DOOR OF THE MINING COMPANIES THEMSELVES. QTE OVER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME NOW THE MINING COMPANIES HAVE BEEN MAKING STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE AFRICAN MINeworkERS, AND SOME COMPANY SPOKESMEN HAVE EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT THE ONLY SUITABLE INSTRUMENT FOR THIS WOULD BE RECOGNISED TRADE UNION FOR AFRICAN MINERS.

QTE IN ACTUAL FACT, & DESPITE THE STATEMENTS, VIRTUALLY NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION GAP.

QTE ON NOVEMBER 23 LAST YEAR I HELD INITIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE EMBRYO LESOTHO MINE LABOUR WORKERS' UNION IN MASERU AFTER TUCSA HAD BEEN APPROACHED FOR ASSISTANCE IN FORMING A UNION FOR AFRICAN MINERS.

QTE IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT AMONG THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED AT THAT MEETING WAS THE GRIEVANCE ISSUE OF DEFERRED PAY--EVIDENTLY THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT UNREST.

QTE ON MY RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA FROM MASERU I PUBLICLY REPORTED ON THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PEOPLE I HAD MET, AND ALSO GAVE AS MY OPINION THAT THE INDUSTRY SHOULD QUICKLY COME TO TERMS WITH THE NEW UNION WHICH WAS BEING FORMED.

QTE I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY THAT UNLESS THE INTENDED UNION WAS RECOGNISED, THESE MIGRANT WORKERS COULD EASILY BECOME THE PAWNS OF POLITICIANS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES, SINCE THEIR GRIEVANCES WERE REAL & THEIR FRUSTRATION THRESHOLD HAD BEEN REACHED.

QTE I ALSO IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED THE OFFICE OF THE LABOUR ADVISER TO ANGLO-AMERICAN CORPORATION, AND THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES, WITH A VIEW TO DISCUSSING THE ISSUES WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED AT THE MEETING AND COOL DOWN THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION DEVELOPING.

QTE NEITHER OF THE TWO AUTHORITIES APPROACHED RESPONDED. I SUBMIT THAT AN OPPORTUNITY WAS LOST WHICH COULD POSSIBLY HAVE PREVENTED THE RECENT SPATE OF MINE DISTURBANCES.

QTE THE CONSEQUENT LOSS OF LIFE, CURTAILED GOLD PRODUCTION, FURTHER WORSENING OF LABOUR RELATIONS & A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY COULD ALL HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, & BOTH SOUTH AFRICA & LESOTHO WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HARMED IN THE WORST POSSIBLE WAY.

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QTE WHEN ARE LARGE EMPLOYERS OF BLACK LABOUR GOING TO FACE UP TO REALITY? HOW MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS ARE THEY GOING TO LET SLIP PAST, ANC CAN SOUTH AFRICA MUCH LONGER AFFORD THEIR WISHY-WASHY TACTICS FOR COMBATING THE CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS OF OUR MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY? UNQTE.

GUTHRIE

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